5306 Reflection

The Fundamentals of Educational Technology was my first online course that I had ever taken. The entire experience was new and rather intimidating at first. After struggling with the courseware for a couple of weeks, I was able to concentrate on the course content. We learned key components of the Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology which also was new knowledge for me. I had not been exposed to any technology plan in the past. We reviewed the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Technology Applications standards for professional educators and the Technology Applications for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for students. I have to admit, I knew very little information on either one and the information at times appeared to be in a new technical language that I was thrust into. The curriculum is a dynamic spiraling framework with four domains: Acquisition of Information, Work-Manipulation of Data, and Communication/Publishing. The most challenging assignment in the course was when we manipulated data to make informed decisions for achieving school improvement. We had to analyze the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) that evaluates schools with report cards of their yearly performance. It enlightened me to learn reasons why school personnel and leaders focus so much on these scores, since much of our state funding relies on the success of these reports. My knowledge was limited on the Texas Campus and District School Technology and Readiness (STaR) charts. But, I helped my director create a presentation for teachers to explain step by step, how to fill out the form properly. I never knew the form helps leaders devise plans for future outcomes on school campuses. Now that I am informed and see its importance, I want to inspire others to be mindful next time. Once we devised our plan from studying the AEIS reports, we had to create a presentation to place on a blog. I had some experience with blogs and appreciated the new skills that I was forced to learn while setting up one. The skills I learned from the assignments will be useful for me to share with teachers. I enjoyed the interesting readings about digital learners, new Web 2.0 tools, and creating 21st Century schools. The course discussed the controversies of strict Acceptable Use Policies in schools, Ethical behaviors, filtering, and Internet safety. Again, my knowledge was limited, but I felt the learning was beneficial in my job position. We were asked to create a wiki for use in our current job position, so I created one on Wikispaces. The challenge for me was not creating the wiki; it was getting teachers in my district to participate in the learning community. Most teachers had never heard of wikis, and were intimidated to try a new technology tool. I later introduced the wiki during some of my training sessions for district software applications. I showed participants how to login to the wiki and modeled how to add tips, links, and post discussions during the workshop. We used the tool as we gave our training session to post questions. It was received with more positive results during the training sessions.